

## **WINCHESTER PARKING AUTHORITY**

**June 27, 2013**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Dick Helm, Kim Burke, Jeffery Rives, & Mike Miller

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Howard Manheimer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Samantha Anderson, Teresa Couch, Dale Iman, Robert Taylor, Vic Bradshaw & Chad Booher

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### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Helm called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m. at which time it was determined a quorum was present.

### **II. REVIEW OF MAY 2013 MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes were submitted by Chairman Helm and, without objection, were unanimously approved.

### **III. REVENUE REPORT FOR MAY 2013**

Rives reported that the grand revenue total for May 2013 was \$100,622, a decrease of \$9,103 or -8% in comparison to May 2012. Total hourly revenue for May 2013 was \$45,286, an increase of \$3,582 or 9% in comparison to May 2012. SABF (Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival) reserved ticket sales revenue and SABF cash sales revenue in a combined total of \$28,269 was reflected in the hourly revenue total. Rent revenue for May 2013 was \$33,959, a decrease of \$9,142 or -21% in comparison to May 2012. Total meter and fine revenue for May 2013 was \$20,189, a decrease of \$3,146 or -13% in comparison to May 2012. Validation coupon revenue was \$1,188 for May 2013 which included validation coupon sales for the Apple Blossom Bloomin Wine Festival. There was no miscellaneous revenue to report for May 2013. Total hourly parking tickets for May 2013 was reported at 7,683 showing a decrease of 1,730 tickets in comparison to the previous month. At the end of May 2013, there were 944 spaces or 67% of total utilization of spaces being rented at all four parking garages with a total of 460 spaces available for rent. Of the 460 spaces available for rent, 333 spaces were located on the roof and 127 spaces were located undercover. At the end of May 2013, the total revenue for FY 2013 thus far was reported at \$898,467 or 7% in comparison to the previous year.

Rives noted that the noticeable reduction in reported rent revenue was due to timing issues as to when payments were received for the month and when the payments were actually processed. Rives also noted that decreases in meter and fine revenues have continued for the last four to five months indicating that a trend is occurring. Rives stated that occupancy in the four garages have remained consistent with available spaces continuing to be plentiful.

Helm stated that statistically the downward trend in meter and fine revenues have been continuing for quite a while. Helm noted that the Authority should continue to monitor the meter and fine revenue collections for any indications that it may be approaching a threshold, whereas, the deficiency of revenue could become a detriment to the Authority's overall fiscal health.

#### **IV. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR MAY 2013**

Anderson informed the Authority of the following:

1. Hop Blossom event was held on June 8, 2013. The garages were busy and the Authority received an email from the event organizers thanking them for their assistance in utilizing Hable lot.
2. Friday Night Live event was held on June 14, 2013. The garages were not as busy as during the Hop Blossom event, however, no complaints were received from nearby businesses regarding the use of the Cork and Hable lots. Dario Savarese seemed very appreciative of the Parking Authority's efforts.
3. Maintenance at Court Square AP – Progress is still being made at CS AP
  - a. Work is continuing on painting the railings black in the stairwells.
  - b. Rust at the overhang in the pedestrian walkway has been removed and the area has been painted gray. This has resulted in an aesthetic improvement.
  - c. The brick wall around the front of the garage and along Boscawen Street to the pedestrian walkway has been power washed. The remaining sections of the wall will need to be completed.
  - d. The elevator doors have been painted red and it has a very nice appearance.
4. Other garage maintenance – completed annual maintenance on the filterra at GW AP.
5. Palace lot update – lot is now closed, however, the new topping has been applied to the surface and the lot will be reopened soon.
6. Met with downtown residents on June 5, 2013 as Amy Simmons (Marketing Coordinator) is running a story in citE news as a resident spotlight. Anderson and Simmons were given this task by the economic development team.
7. Preparing for the arrival of antique cars that will be using the GW AP this weekend from June 28 - June 30, 2013. The individuals will be staying at the George Washington Hotel and will be using the majority of the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the garage for their parking. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year the group has used the garage and it is a joy having them downtown.
8. The Mustang Shelby car show was in town this month and used the GW AP for their parking needs as well.



**9. Parking meter update**

- a. Have been preparing for the meter changes.
  - b. Due to unforeseen problems resulting in the inability to have hand held device that is used to program the new meters rates shipped and received in time for the weekend, the scheduled work with Booher and Associates has been delayed until the week of July 8, 2013. As a result there will be a delay in the implementation of the meter rate increases that was originally scheduled to be in effect on July 1, 2013. Stickers will be applied once the new rate change has occurred.
  - c. A press release has been sent to the media and notices have been developed and placed at the library, court house, City Hall, Frederick county complex and parking garages notifying the public of the meter changes. Amy Simmons, the marketing coordinator, has developed a button for the city homepage that links directly to the new meter information. The website has been updated this week with the new meter rate information and Simmons is working to update our parking brochure. Jennifer Bell, the downtown manager, has also sent an email to her merchants asking them to remind their customers and employees of the new rates and extension of hours.
  - d. Decision has been made to program the digital meters to accept \$1 coins as payment. The slots that are being purchased are used and sold at a price of \$1 apiece. Decision was based upon the idea that it was a good time to offer the coins and administer the changes along with the scheduled meter programming work. The automated paystations in the garages dispense \$1 coins as change, therefore, the public will now have the convenience of using those coins for payment when parking at the meters. The rate structure for the dollar coin is, \$1 coin = 80 minutes and is accepted at all digital meters except for meters on Boscawen St. where 1 hour time limits are in place.
  - e. Suggest that the Authority could offer a "courtesy notice" to those that park from 4 pm – 6 pm at the designated meters with rate increases and extension of hours instead of issuing tickets for a time period - at the very least through August 1, 2013. Anderson presented a draft of the courtesy notice to the Authority.
- 10.** Two staff members are scheduled to work during the Independence Rocking Eve event being held on July 3, 2013. As this time Court Square AP will not be impacted as both entrance and exit will be open, however, the status of the GW AP Kent St. entrance and exit availability is yet to be determined due to Kent St. closure during the event. **Update:** Since meeting, it has been determined that the portion of Kent. St. in front of the GW AP will remain open for public access during the event.
- 11.** Whitaker was in town this week to do repairs and maintenance on paystations and equipment.



Iman asked Anderson for clarification on meters accepting dollar coins. Anderson explained that the new slots will allow customers to use dollar coins as an acceptable form of payment at designated meters which will be an additional convenience for customers who may use the garages and receive dollar coins as change from the paystations.

Helm recommended that the Authority should ease into the enforcement of the meter rate increases during the transition period. Helm suggested to the Authority that it use the courtesy notice cards immediately before the rate increases officially go into effect as a tool to better prepare the public for the impending rate changes.

## **V. OLD BUSINESS**

### **1. Committee Update**

The committee informed the Authority that it reviewed the WPA expenditures and revenues and arrived at the conclusion that it is being managed properly and as efficiently as possible by Anderson. Rives recommended that the Authority reduce expenditures by disconnecting current phone lines that are not being used on a regular basis at Loudoun, Braddock and Court Square Autoparks. This measure would provide a savings of approximately \$500 per year. Rives also recommended that the \$15,000 that is being held for future purchase of additional digital meters be delayed and reintroduce said monies back into the budget at a later date. It was the opinion of Rives and Burke that the Authority has done everything that it possibly can to keep expenditures at a minimum.

Helm noted that he was pleased to hear that the Authority was operating responsibly and inquired as to whether the overall operations were suffering as a result of the tightening of its budget. Burke responded by noting that the committee did not notice any adverse effects that were taking place as a result of operating under a tight budget. Rives added that it would be beneficial to the Authority if the meter enforcement coverage could be increased.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Grace Lutheran Church Request**

Helm explained to the Authority the request from Robert Taylor of the Grace Lutheran Church to have 5 metered spaces bagged for no parking at the location in front of the Grace buildings on Boscawen St. between Indian Alley and Braddock St. during Vacation Bible School and Youth Camp being held on July 8 – July 12 and July 15 – 19, 2013 between the hours of 8 am. – 12:30 pm. Helm asked Taylor if there were any additional changes that need to be added to the request. Taylor responded by stating that during the last two days of the week of July 15 – 19, 2013 the attendance level usually declines therefore; the church may not have a need to



bag the requested meters. Taylor added that he could manage the use of the bags during this time and would use only what he felt was necessary.

Burke asked who would be expected to manage this and have there been problems with managing this in the past. Anderson replied by stating that Taylor and the police department assists in managing the parking and traffic in this area during this time and it usually goes well. Helm noted that the church programs were worthy of the Authority's accommodations. Helm asked that Taylor and the church use the no parking bags efficiently so as it does not create parking problems for customers who wish to visit the other surrounding businesses.

On motion duly made by Burke and seconded by Miller, the Authority approved the Grace Lutheran Church request to bag 5 metered spaces located in front of the Grace buildings on Boscawen St., between Indian Alley and Braddock St. from July 8 – July 12, 2013 and from July 15 – July 19, 2013 between the hours of 8 am – 12:30 pm for Vacation Bible School and Youth Camp. The Authority recommended that the Church consider using the parking lot in the rear behind the church buildings for the Youth Camp instead of the parking meters on Boscawen St.

## **2. Global Parking Discussion**

Helm explained to the Authority that City Council requested that it discuss the parameters for parking resources and management. Key points of the discussion were as follows:

- **Helm:** Per Council request, the Authority has been asked to revisit and discuss the parameters as to how parking resources are managed. The Authority would need to familiarize itself with what it currently has in resources and how it is managed. There is a need for the Authority to revisit its policies and the foundations on which the Authority bases its judgments. The Authority will need to continue and maintain its current policies, however, look at changes that the Authority could or would make for better parking management. The overall intent being that the relationship between WPA and Council becomes less pretentious.
  - ✓ Current model used for parking management was based on a study that was completed in 1998 by Old Town stakeholders. Hundreds of hours of volunteer time were used to do the previous study which included actually watching how the public used parking.
  - ✓ Shoup Group, a nationally recognized group who completes studies of parking management and resources, did a presentation in 2008.
- **Iman:** Pleased to hear the Authority is looking into this. Spoke with Councilor Willingham about the subject. There is a need to look at arrangements in parking and adjustments in parking rates. There are a number of things occurring in relation to the City and parking, one of which is the possibility of the County moving its offices out of Winchester which will have a huge impact on the City.



The City will attempt to encourage the County to continue payments to WPA until the empty building is occupied or another time frame can be reached.

- ✓ City will discuss with others the use of an empty County Administration building, City has control of zoning.
  - ✓ City plans to host more events, however, the public is intimidated by using the garages as if a monster is inside them.
  - ✓ Under the impression that Willingham is looking for a 5 year projection of the parking study.
  - ✓ City is attempting to attract retirees and young professionals to the area.
  - ✓ The availability of apartments and condos in the downtown area seems to be working well.
  - ✓ Because of more people coming to Winchester (downtown), WPA needs to make parking more attractive and accommodate the citizens and public.
- **Helm:** The Authority already has revenue projection information at the ready. WPA is willing to work with Council for ideas. Asked Anderson to focus on the 5 year projection. WPA needs to reach out and engage stakeholders of the City such as businesses, property owners, landlords and residences in the discussion. In the early stages of study WPA should reach out to stakeholders with assistance from OTDB and Merchant Association. Asked Anderson to meet with Jennifer Bell to compile a list of stakeholders and consumers. This will not be an easy process for data gathering.
  - **Helm:** The Authority will need to create a mission statement which includes the reevaluation of the foundation principles for parking and to look into inequitable parking spaces as to how to manage spaces efficiently.
  - **Burke:** The Authority needs to look at garages and how they are currently operated. Seek options as to how to operate them more efficiently by utilizing empty rental spaces. Helm added that the Authority would need to ask how current monthly renters would feel if the Authority would allow the use of empty rental spaces for additional hourly parking.
  - **Rives:** Include in the parking study ways to educate the public on how to use automated machines in the garages.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:26 a.m. The next meeting of the Winchester Parking Authority is scheduled for Thursday July 25, 2013 at 7:30 a.m. in Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted,

Teresa Couch  
Secretary

Minutes Approved:

